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NIGHT SCHOOLS IN CANADA IN RECENT YEARS

Evening classes are conducted by a variety of agencies in Canada. They experienced a steady and rapid growth in popularity in the decade or more preceding 1931. Since 1931, for reasons mainly economic at bottom, the number of them and their enrolment have shown sharp declines. The data that follow show what has happened in three of the most important groups.

Classes in connection with the provincial school systems. From the standpoint of the number of students reached, the classes supported as a part of the provincial school systems come first. As is shown in the following table, the enrolment in these classes dropped from 89,847 in the school year ending in 1931 to 66,501 two years later. Though returns for 1934 are not complete, it is known that there was another very large increase. Some municipalities have abandoned the classes as an economy measure, and others report a falling-off in attendance by reason of young people losing interest in their self-improvement when continuously unable to find employment.

	Enrolment			
	1930	1931	1932	1933
<u>Prince Edward Island</u>	69	-	-	-
<u>Nova Scotia, Total</u>	2,703	2,573	2,517	2,236
Coal mining classes	749	674	658	642
General technical classes	1,922	1,865	1,816	1,554
College of Art	32	34	43	40
<u>New Brunswick</u>	2,512	2,556	2,024	812
<u>Quebec, Total</u>	14,298	16,344	16,839	15,108
Non-technical (90% learning English only)	6,643	7,960	9,066	8,621
At technical schools	3,381	3,503	2,502	2,352
Arts and Trades schools	2,836	3,563	3,881	3,057
Fine Arts schools	437	430	378	368
Le Monument National	1,001	888	1,012	710
<u>Ontario, Total</u>	51,363	54,756	51,770	38,314
Elementary schools	3,369	4,043	2,882	1,565
Academic high schools	3,563	3,273	3,550	2,889
Vocational schools	44,431	47,440	45,338	33,860
<u>Manitoba</u>	3,333	2,732	2,415	2,002
<u>Saskatchewan</u>	1,701	1,908	3,357	1,659
<u>Alberta</u>	2,032	1,811	1,290	1,770
<u>British Columbia</u>	6,419	7,167	6,269	4,600
TOTAL CANADA	84,430	89,847	86,481	66,501

The above table includes only classes that normally operate throughout the winter. This excludes extension courses from provincial Departments, which are perhaps especially important in Quebec, where the Department of Education has a staff of seven graduate dress-makers who travel about the province giving courses which usually last three weeks or more. In 1932-33 there was an attendance of 3,038 women and girls at their courses. The Department of Agriculture since 1930 has maintained a staff of travelling instructresses in handicrafts, - carding, spinning, weaving, etc. They gave 215 series of lectures in 1932-33, attended by 11,926 persons. Apart from these there are the more occasional agricultural and household extension services like those in other provinces.

Classes at the Universities and Colleges. Some of the universities, specially those located in the largest cities, offer evening courses to the general populace. Occasionally they are given for credit toward a university degree, but more often not. In contrast to the classes at the provincial schools the university courses lean toward subjects in literature and the social sciences rather than technical or vocational subjects, and this may explain in part why their enrolment has not declined so seriously. The object in attending the type of course offered by the universities is probably not as commonly the improvement of the student's economic position. The record of four years' enrolment follows:

	Enrolment			
	1930	1931	1932	1933
McGill University	879	880	686	631
École des Hautes Etudes Commerciales	481	473	379	407
Université d'Ottawa	19	27	89	201
Collège des Dominicains d'Ottawa	-	-	50	80
University of Western Ontario	31	75	112	87
McMaster University	-	91	134	143
Margaret Eaton School	104	145	114	137
University of Toronto, Tutorial	1,826	2,393	2,238	1,822
University of Toronto, W.E.A. (15 cities)	425	619	910	1,328
University of Toronto, Teachers' Classes	273	284	321	346
University of Manitoba	260	295	134	85
University of Saskatchewan	167	265	245	108
Mount Royal College, Calgary	-	-	30	40
University of British Columbia	145	153	156	145
Victoria College	29	43	-	-
TOTAL	4,639	5,743	5,598	5,560

There has been only a slight decline from the total enrolment of 5,743 in 1931, and in the case of the Workers' Educational Association of Ontario, whose tutors are paid by the University of Toronto, there has been an outstanding increase. These classes are now conducted in 15 towns and cities.

Classes at Private Commercial Schools. Evening courses at the type of institution commonly called a business college have suffered a loss of attendance much more severe than either of the two foregoing. This was probably to have been expected at a time of general economic difficulty, because of the cost of these courses as compared with those at the provincial schools and universities. The table hereunder for eight of the provinces (Quebec excepted) shows the trend of enrolment since 1930.

	Enrolment			
	1930	1931	1932	1933
Prince Edward Island	45	51	36	36
Nova Scotia	211	167	133	102
New Brunswick	256	209	204	141
Ontario	4,476	3,099	2,141	1,194
Manitoba	1,565	1,248	729	708
Saskatchewan	459	468	279	260
Alberta	912	669	491	-
British Columbia	755	585	413	304
TOTAL, 8 provinces	8,679	6,496	4,426	-

Miscellaneous classes. The figures given for the three foregoing groups should not be taken as a complete record of systematic evening study in Canada, by any means. It is perhaps especially worth mentioning that during the time the enrolment in classes of the above kinds has been falling, various voluntary organizations, such as in Montreal, Edmonton and Calgary, have undertaken to provide classes for the unemployed. It is also in the last four years that the remarkable growth in the study clubs organized by St. Francis Xavier University has taken place, and last winter witnessed beginnings of a similar kind in other provinces, e.g., Prince Edward Island, Alberta and Manitoba. Similarly with the Frontier College, with its labourer-teachers in all parts of the Dominion; there has been no diminution in its activities. Though a record of these more "spontaneous" activities is not complete, their increase seems to be evidence of them replacing in some measure the more "provided" classes of the schools and universities. Whether this is a permanent development remains to be seen.

